

Chairman, thank you for allowing me to participate in today's hearing. The recent tragedy between a small plane and a sightseeing helicopter over the Hudson River highlights the need for improved oversight of aircraft in this area. It is critical that this congested airspace be better regulated. I represent Hudson County in New Jersey, which borders the Hudson River directly across from Manhattan. [Ellis Island](#) and [Liberty Island](#) lie entirely within Hudson County's waters. The scenic views of New York City, New Jersey, as well as the Statue of Liberty attract large numbers of aircraft to the Hudson River corridor. On any given nice day upwards of 600 aircraft can be passing over the Hudson River. While the vast majority of aircraft travel safely through the area, it does not alleviate our responsibility to address safety concerns. For years, the FAA insisted that it lacked statutory authority to regulate the airspace below 1100 feet. While I am encouraged to see that FAA has reversed its position, I am concerned whether the recent recommendations go far enough to prevent further tragedies – from ensuring better handoffs of aircraft between control towers to a comprehensive system for regulating flights below 1,000 feet and improving safety standards for commercial sightseeing tour operations. In addition to safety concerns, I am also concerned about the noise associated with low-flying aircraft. The Task Force included a recommendation that helicopters over the Hudson River must fly below 1000 feet. In the past, the number of sightseeing helicopters has exceeded 20,000 a year. Having that many aircraft flying at lower altitudes creates a constant noise nuisance for those in New Jersey living along the Hudson River. From my perspective, FAA's recommendation for helicopters seems to simply trade one problem for another. Thank you again, Chairman, for holding this important hearing and allowing me to participate. I look forward to discussing these issues with the witnesses.